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ABSTRACT

A proposal to establish an experimental non-graded course in English is described, along with the results from the students' course evaluation. The following hypotheses and responses are disclosed. It was believed that a non-graded class situation would (1) have a positive effect on the student, (2) improve student-instructor relationships, (3) encourage cooperation among students, (4) result in greater student involvement, and (5) encourage self-initiated reading and creativity. Student evaluation showed a general positive reaction toward the non-graded approach. Specifically, they felt free of tension, unnecessary pressure, and competition for grades. The non-graded course, however, did not increase their interest in the subject matter. Students regarded the instructor positively and saw him as a helper rather than as a distributor of grades. They did not feel the instructor's effectiveness was diminished. The class as a whole worked together and the students were encouraged to help one another. Feelings toward involvement in class discussion were highly positive. The students also felt encouraged to produce a good paper and to explore new ways of self-expression. The student questionnaire is included. (MN)

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PROPOSAL ON EXPERIMENTAL NON-GRADED

STUDENT EVALUATION

FOR ENGLISH 132 DURING

SPRING SEMESTER 1971

College of the Mainland
Texas City, Texas

JC 710 227

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LOS ANGELES

OCT 21 1971

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INFORMATION

Proposal on Experimental Non-Graded Student Evaluation
for English 132 During Spring Semester 1971

INTRODUCTION

English 132, an introduction to literature, is, like many other humanities courses, properly concerned primarily with the affective domain.* The course is designed to encourage the student in developing positive attitudes toward reading (and creating) works of literature and toward exercising the imagination. The goal is that the student will receive some long-range benefits - i.e. that he will continue to read works of literature after the semester is over and that he will develop a greater awareness of self and empathy with others.

In order for long-range benefits to occur, the reading needs to become an activity which is intrinsically rewarding and not just a necessary task which separates the student from a grade, degree, or job.** And as Leonard Silver of Cornell University puts it, "You have to do more than just tell the students that grades are less important than knowing the work. . . "1

In order to give English 132 the greatest chance of success, a grading system should be used which complements the goals of this course. In a humanities course, it is desirable to have a system of evaluation which emphasizes individuals rather than categories. The categories of A, B, and C are not flexible enough to recognize the complexity of the learning experience. (According to Wesley J. Dale, the use of letter grades "presents a

* As explained in Bloom's Taxonomy, there are three domains: the cognitive affective, and psychomotor. The affective domain is the one oriented to attitude rather than to factual knowledge.

** See page for a collection of excerpts from George Leonard's Education and Ectstasy which develop this area of "internal" and "external" rewards.

1 As quoted by Matthew R. Sagan in "The First Year of Pass-Fail at Brandeis University: A Report," Journal of Higher Education, February 1969, pp.135-144.

deceptive appearance of objectivity and precise evaluation."2 They are more arbitrary than they seem.) In a course which is concerned with counteracting dehumanizing factors in life, the system of evaluation should minimize the aura of monetary exchange and foster a spirit of humane co-operation. In a course which emphasizes creativity, the system of evaluation itself should be a more creative one.

Marshall McLuhan's phrase "The medium is the message" is applicable here. Does the medium of evaluation presently used--A, B, C--convey a message quite different from the one we desire? Is the message that only external rewards make reading worthwhile? That students fall neatly into three categories? That teachers are more interested in grading their students than in helping them? Certainly, this grading system has other negative associations for many students because of their experiences in public schools.

This concern led to the desire to design a more appropriate system of student evaluation. This desire coupled with the responsibility stated by the Prospectus as one of the "Professor's Rights": "The teacher will be encouraged to assume creatively the fullest measure of responsibility, in accordance with his position descrition, for conceiving, designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating the learning work of students." The following proposal is the result of this desire and this responsibility.

PROPOSAL

Statement of Proposal

The passing grades of A, B, C-- which are used in the present grading system--will be replaced with credit for the course and a paragraph of evaluation on each student.

2 Wesley J. Dale, "Concerning Grading and Other Forms of Student Evaluation," p. ERIC ED 0360260

NOTE: The student will still receive credit for the course on the basis of having met the performance objectives as specified.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. We will never discover if the standard grading system can be improved unless we experiment with a different system.
2. Even though a one-semester trial is not really adequate to counteract at least twelve years of training, we must begin somewhere.
3. Students at College of the Mainland can become more creative, empathetic, and aware individuals.
4. If students develop positive attitudes toward reading and creating works of literature, they will be more likely to continue these activities after the semester is over.
5. The student-instructor relationship is important in the learning process.
6. The student-student relationship is important in the learning process.
7. The morale of the student is important in the learning process.
8. Student involvement is necessary to the learning process.

HYPOTHESES

We believe the following statements to be true and will check their validity in this experiment:

1. That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will have a positive effect on the morale of the student.
2. That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will have a positive effect on the student-instructor relationship.
3. That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will encourage co-operation among students.

4. That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will result in greater student involvement.
5. That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will encourage positive attitudes toward reading works of literature.
6. That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will encourage creativity on the part of the student.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Morale shall be defined negatively as destructive tension felt by the student due to the course and positively as the feeling on the part of the student that he has a worthwhile contribution to make to the course and is free to make it.
2. The Student-Instructor Relationship will be defined negatively as the student's avoidance of and resistance to the instructor and positively as the student's helping and working with the instructor and the student's feeling that the instructor is helpful.
3. Co-operation will be defined positively as students working together, helping one another.
4. Involvement will be defined negatively as avoidance of and lack of participation in the various learning activities and positively as participation in the learning activities including: (1) class discussion, (2) projects and (3) non-required activities (voluntary participation) related to the course. Attrition and poor attendance will be signs of negative involvement.
5. Positive Attitude will be defined as eagerness toward an activity and the inclination to repeat a similar activity on one's own when it is not required.
6. Creativity will be defined as the student's engaging in an activity which is not structured for him but in which he uses his original judgment. This would include writing short stories or poems, developing original projects, and volunteering original ideas for designing class learning. Creativity will be defined negatively as the avoidance of or resistance to non-structured activities.

PROCEDURES

1. The Experimental Group. Students in all sections of English 132 except for one day section will be evaluated with the experimental non-graded system. Students will not know in advance whether they are enrolling in a graded or non-graded section. The graded section will be taught by an instructor (Robertson) who also has two non-graded day sections. Evaluation will be conducted of all of the sections of English 132, but certain types of evaluation will be based only on the comparison of the two non-graded and one graded section taught by the same instructor.

2. Variable. The substitution of the non-graded system (credit) for the graded system (A, B, C) will be the variable. It will be the only planned-for difference between the two experimental and one traditional section taught by the same instructor(with the exception under work program). Where other teachers are involved, that will be a second variable--but it is not the aim of this experiment to test this second variable.

3. Student Work Program. The non-graded system will necessitate a change in the work program insofar as the categories of objectives in the graded system--for C, for B, for A--are not applicable. The non-graded sections will have all of the requirements specified for a "C" in the graded system plus one further project to be chosen by the student from a list or in conference with the instructor. In the graded section, the "C" students will not be required to do a further project, the "B" students will choose one further project and will have three other requirements designed to measure quality achievement of minimum objectives, the "A" students will choose one additional further project and have one additional quality requirement (see student document for Graded Section for more specific information).

4. Manpower and Resources Required for Implementation. The registrar will need to indicate Credit on the student's transcript instead of an A, B, or C, place the paragraph of evaluation in the student's file, and send out with transcripts an explanation of the symbol Credit and an explanation that the paragraph of evaluation is available should it ever be necessary to help the student and that the student did receive credit on the basis of meeting specified course objectives.

5. Evaluation

A. Hypothesis #5. A locally designed instrument will be used to learn the student's perception of his attitude toward reading works of literature. A pre-test and post-test will be given. We will develope this instrument first.

B. Attitude toward System of Evaluation. The student in the experimental sections will be asked to indicate his personal reaction to the non-graded system of evaluation at the beginning and again at the end of the course.

The student in the control group will be asked to indicate his attitude toward being in the graded section.

C. Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

1) Questionnaire. A locally designed instrument will be used to learn the student's perception of his morale in the course, the student-instructor relationship, student co-operation, his ability to do creative thinking, and his involvement in the course.

2) Observation. Evaluation of morale, student-instructor relationship, co-operation, involvement, and creativity will also be made through observation by members of the instructional team. A written journal will be kept. Records will be made of attrition and attendance.

D. Results of student and instructor evaluation of the traditionally graded section will be compared with the results of evaluation of the two non-graded sections taught by the same instructor.

NOTE: Robert F. Mager's Developing Attitude Toward Learning will be used as a guide in designing the instruments to be used in evaluation.

APPENDIX #1

VARIATIONS OF THE SYSTEM OF USE

There are many colleges and universities which use some form of the "pass-fail" system. The extent to which they use it varies.

New College in Sarasota, Florida is a model for a proposal of this sort, although it goes even beyond the "pass-fail" system.

> New College operates on the view that "grades", be they alphabetic or numerical in nature, tend to orient the student's efforts toward achieving the "reward" attendent on a high "GPA," in whatever form it takes, rather than toward exploring the intrinsic rewards inherent in learning. This relegates the learning process itself to a secondary role, that of a mere fulfillment of requirements, rather than a desire to learn for the sake of knowledge.
>
> In an attempt to avoid this problem New College has adopted a system of ungraded written evaluation for all student work. Such evaluations normally consist of a paragraph describing the student's aptitude, participation, work, and progress in the area concerned, as well as an indication of whether or not the work is satisfactory. This, hopefully, gives the student a better idea of what his strong and weak points are in order that he may make fuller use of the former and work to strengthen the latter.
>
> . . . a "pass" system is used for transcripts sent to other institutions, meaning that unsatisfactory or incomplete (until such time as it is completed) work is simply not listed. Along with the transcript, the college recorder attaches a letter explaining our evaluation system.*

The University of Houston has over fifty courses which are offered on a pass-fail basis. Most of these are at the graduate level.**

* This is taken from "The New College 'Grading' System," a copy of which is included in the Appendix #2

** The second document in the Appendix #2 is a letter which lists these courses.

The University of Texas allows undergraduate students "to take not more than five semester courses in elective subjects outside their major area on a Pass-Fail basis as part of the hours required for their degree."***

Austin College used Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory for courses in the January Term 1970 (Jan. 5-Jan. 31), an enrichment program of special short courses.

University of California at Berkeley makes use of a Passed/Not Passed system according to Clinton C. Gilliam, registrar: "For a number of years the Berkeley Campus permitted honor students to take one course per term on a P/NP basis. This privilege was later expanded to include all students in good standing. More recently it was further expanded to allow students to take one third of the remaining units toward their degree on a P/NP basis." ****

Bennington College in Bennington, Vermont, uses a pass-fail system in which the student receives a written report. But "a grade is assigned for the course work done which is not used intramurally and of which the student is not informed. It is recorded in a separate file and only used when required for transcript purposes. . ."*****

Some other colleges and universities which use the pass-fail system to some extent are: Brandeis University, Sarah Lawrence, Knox College, Cornell University, and Princeton University.

*** The third document in the appendix #2 explains this policy further.

**** The fourth document in the appendix #2 is a letter from Berkeley's registrar.

*****The fifth document in the appendix #2 is a letter from Bennington's Dean of Studies.

TRANSFERRING

In trying to determine the consequences on our students of transferring to another college, Jo Ann Pevoto contacted officials at the University of Houston, Sam Houston, and Stephen F. Austin.

At The University of Houston, no grades (or pass-fail) received prior to his enrollment are computed into a student's average. If the student should be eligible for graduation with honors, his total work at all colleges will be computed. In that case, correspondence would have to be used to decide how he performed in a pass-fail course. (The paragraphs of evaluation could help us here.)

At Sam Houston, according to Dean Reed Lindsey, Director of Admissions and Registrar, the Pass would be counted as a C for admission purposes, but all honors and other considerations are determined from Sam Houston averages.

At Stephen F. Austin, according to Mr. Wright, the Assistant Director of Admissions, in order to graduate, the student must have a C average at Stephen F. Honors or scholarships are based on the cumulative average, and the pass would count as a C.

EDUCATION AND ECSTASY - George Leonard

1. Pages 82-83

"Civilization reached its extreme, its death throes during the age of mass production, not so long ago. That was when human beings were treated, literally, as compnents of the social machine, as a replaceable and expendable commodities. That was when specialization and standardization ran amok, creating such close resemblance between individuals within a specialty that narrow competition became just about the only way that people could be distinguished one from the other. Competition became the chief ostensible motive force in Western mass education, as it seemed more and more to imitate the production line, with grades, honors and tests of all kinds gathering about them a power and glory all out of proportion to their quite limited function as learning aids."

(The underlining is mine)

2. Pages 121-122

"Acquisition, too, served not only as a motivator but also as a purpose of life. In our own society, acquisition reached its fullest expression in the accumulation of wealth. (When you ask, "What's Mr. Jones worth?," there's no doubt about what you mean.) Students have been prepared for this by the use of symbols - gold stars, class listings, awards. Piling up honors, tangible or intangible, has had the effect of divorcing the student from his own feelings, his own being. A man's worth, it might be noted, is measured by things outside himself."

(The underlining is mine)

3. Page 129

"The first thing schools can do to reduce narrow competition, eager acquisition and aggression is to stop teaching them. Grades, tests, prizes, honors have proven woefully inadequate, even at the height of the Civilized Epoch. It has been previously argued, in fact, that competition was used in the schools not really to help students learn other subjects, but to teach competition itself, to further specialization and standardization. When learning becomes truly rewarding for its own sake - and this goal has been given lip service for centuries - then narrow competition will be seen for what it is: irrelevant to the learning process and damaging to the development of free-ranging, lifelong learners."

(The underlining is mine)

TO: COMMITTEE ON INSTRUCTION

FROM: PAULA ROBERTSON

CONCERNING: RESULTS OF NON-GRADED EXPERIMENT (SPRING 1971)

After reviewing the results of the questionnaires given to the students of English 132 last Spring, I want to share with you what information and observations I have so far compiled from the tabulation of the "Post-Semester Questionnaire on Grading System" (copy attached - Appendix 2). The first part of this report I devote to the results of Part II of this questionnaire. Beginning on page 12 , I have also included some of the student responses to the questions on Part I. I do not have any definite conclusions and recommendations at this point, since I do not feel that the one-semester experiment was conclusive and I do have mixed feelings about whether the system actually results in a more effective learning situation with students who have 12 years experience with grades as part of them. Philosophically, I still believe that the non-graded system is sounder. I will be glad to discuss with you any questions which this report raises for you.

I do have some reservations concerning the results of this questionnaire. It had no ancestors known to me, and I saw "after the fact" the need for redesigning it. I did, I believe, correct its most obvious faults by throwing out six statements from Part II after I had tabulated the results.* My second reservation is that, although the statements refer consistently to the nongraded system, I doubt that the students always carefully sorted out the "system" from the "course" (if indeed this is at all possible to do). That is, the results may reflect a generally positive evaluation of the course more than it does an actual evaluation

* Information concerning why I discarded these questions is given in Appendix I.

of the system itself. I do not claim, then, that the results are necessarily accurate but only that they do reflect the student's perceptions, which certainly gives us important information.

I have not applied statistical formulas to the results: I do not have sufficient knowledge of statistics to do so and, since I feel much more work needs to be done to really test the basis of this experiment, I do not feel that applying statistical formulas at this point would really be that helpful. I have tried to show positive and negative trends after each statement and after the information concerning each hypothesis.

Part II of this questionnaire was designed to test hypothesis #1, #2, #3, #4, and #6 of the experimental proposal. The hypothesis, definitions of terms, statements related to the hypothesis, and results of the 96 completed questionnaires are given on the following pages. In trying to determine negative and positive trends on each statement and on each hypothesis, I assigned the following values to the responses: most favorable (strongly agree or strongly disagree depending upon the wording of the statements) +2; favorable +1; hot sure 0; unfavorable -1; most unfavorable -2. On individual statements, the highest possible total was +192, if every student responded in the most favorable way. The lowest possible was -192 if all responded in the most unfavorable way. (The scale varied slightly if not all 96 students responded.)

CLARIFICATION:

A positive rating on a statement indicates a response favorable to the non-graded system. Depending on how the statement is worded, it may indicate that the students agreed OR disagreed with that statement.

The code for responses was as follows:

1 Strongly agree

2 Agree somewhat

3 Not sure

4 Disagree somewhat

5 Strongly disagree

HYPOTHESIS #1 That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will have a positive effect on the morale of the student.

(Morale shall be defined negatively as destructive tension felt by the student due to the course and positively as the feeling on the part of the student that he has a worthwhile contribution to make to the course and is free to make it.)

STATEMENT #4, #8, #15, #19, #23, and #26 are related to this hypothesis.

STATEMENT #4: I feel that I became more interested in the subject matter as a result of not receiving grades..

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	No Response
NUMBER RESPONDING	17	21	13	27	17	1

RESULTS: This statement received a negative rating of -6.

STATEMENT #8: It freed me from unnecessary tension and allowed me to work better.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	29	22	11	21	13

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +33

STATEMENT #15: It increased my desire to learn.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	14	19	32	21	10

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +6.

STATEMENT #19: I appreciated not being required to do more than another student in order to earn a higher grade.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	No Response
NUMBER RESPONDING	24	17	18	17	17	3

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +14.

STATEMENT #26: The non-graded system did not give me enough incentive to do my best.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	18	18	16	16	28

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +18.

STATEMENT #23: I felt a lot of unnecessary pressure in this course due to the non-graded system.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	7	15	22	25	27

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +50.

COMMENT ON HYPOTHESIS #1: As you can see, five of these statements received a positive rating, while one received a negative rating.

When I tabulated for each individual student the 6 statements related to this hypothesis, 49 had a positive total on the combined questions, 40 had a negative total, while 4 had the total of 0 and 3 didn't answer all six itmes.

The average rating of the 93 students who responded to the six statements was +1.30 (the lowest possible was -12; the highest +12.)

HYPOTHESIS #2: That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will have a positive effect on the student-instructor relationship.

(The Student-Instructor Relationship will be defined negatively as the student's avoidance of and resistance to the instructor and positively as the student's helping and working with the instructor and the student's feeling that the instructor is helpful.)

STATEMENT #2, #5, #9, #13, and #16 relate to this hypothesis.

STATEMENT #2: It made me think the instructor was more interested in me.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	No Response
NUMBER RESPONDING	14	24	31	9	14	4

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +15.

STATEMENT #5: The non-graded system made me more willing to co-operate with the instructor.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	No Response
NUMBER RESPONDING	16	25	18	23	12	2

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +10.

STATEMENT #9: It encouraged me to think of the instructor as a helper rather than as a distributor of grades.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	31	27	15	11	12

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +54.

STATEMENT #13: The non-graded system encouraged me to talk to the instructor more.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	16	23	29	19	9

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +18.

STATEMENT #16: It decreased the instructor's effectiveness.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	6	5	27	30	28

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +71.

COMMENTS ON HYPOTHESIS #2: As you can see, all five statements received a positive rating.

When I tabluated for each individual student the 5 statements related to this hypothesis, 52 had a positive total, 30 had a negative total, while 9 had the total of 0, and 5 didn't answer all five questions.

The average rating of the 91 students who responded to all five statements was +1.60. (The lowest possible was -10; the highest, +10.

HYPOTHESIS #3: That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will encourage co-operation among students.

(Co-operation will be defined positively as students working together helping one another.)

STATEMENTS #3, #10, #14, and #21 relate to this hypothesis.

STATEMENT #3: It encouraged the class to work together as a whole.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	No Response
NUMBER RESPONDING	29	26	18	14	8	1

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +54.

STATEMENT #10: It caused me to be more eager to help other students.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	13	19	33	23	8

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +6.

STATEMENT #14: It helped the class work together as a whole.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	26	30	25	11	4

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +63.

STATEMENT #21: The non-graded system encouraged students generally to help one another.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	14	33	29	13	7

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +34.

COMMENTS ON HYPOTHESIS #3: All four statements received a positive rating. When I tabluated for each student the four statements related to this hypothesis, 61 had a positive total, 25 had a negative total, and 10 had the total of 0.

The average total for the 96 students who responded to all four statements was +1.65. (The lowest possible was -8; the highest +8.

HYPOTHESIS #4: That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will result in greater student involvement.

(Involvement will be defined negatively as avoidance of and lack of participation in the various learning activities and positively as participation in the learning activities including: [1] class discussion, [2] projects and [3] non-required activities (voluntary participation) related to the course. Attrition and poor attendance will be signs of negative involvement.)

STATEMENTS #1, #7, #11, #18, and #24 are related to this hypothesis.

STATEMENT #1: The non-graded system encouraged me to do as little as possible.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	No Response
NUMBER RESPONDING	12	18	17	18	30	1

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +36.

STATEMENT #7: It discouraged people from participating in class discussions.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	11	7	24	20	34

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +59.

STATEMENT #11: I would have taken more effort with my projects if I knew I would receive a grade.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	20	23	15	14	24

RESULTS: This statement received a negative of -1.

STATEMENT #18: I would have turned in better papers if I had received a grade on them.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	16	13	16	21	30

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +36.

STATEMENT #24: It improved the class discussion.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5
NUMBER RESPONDING	23	30	26	11	6

RESULTS: This statement received a positive rating of +53.

COMMENTS ON HYPOTHESIS #4: Four statements received a positive rating, while one statement received a negative rating.

When I tabluated for each student the five statements related to this hypothesis, 61 had a positive total, 27 had a negative total, 7 had the total of 0, while 1 didn't answer all of the questions.

The average total for the 95 students who responded to all five statements was +2.05. (The lowest possible was -10; the highest, +10.)

HYPOTHESIS #6: That the substitution of credit plus a paragraph of evaluation will encourage creativity.

(Creativity will be defined as the student's engaging in an activity which is not structured for him but in which he uses his original judgment. This would include writing short stories or poems, developing original projects, and volunteering original ideas for designing class learning. Creativity will be defined negatively as the avoidance of or resistance to non-structured activities.

STATEMENTS #6, and #17 are related to this hypothesis.

---

statement #6: It encouraged me to explore on my own new ways of self-expression.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	No Response
NUMBER RESPONDING	21	23	23	18	10	1

RESULTS: This statement received a rating of +27.

STATEMENT #17: Because of the non-graded system I am more willing now to explore things on my own.

RESPONSE	1	2	3	4	5	No Response
NUMBER RESPONDING	12	29	20	19	15	1

RESULTS: This statement received a rating of +7.

COMMENTS ON HYPOTHESIS #6: Both of these statements received a positive rating. When I tabluated for each student the two statements related to this hypothesis, 44 had a positive total, 33 had a negative total, while 16 had the total of 0, and 3 didn't answer both questions.

The average total for the 93 students who responded to both statements was +0.31. (The lowest possible was -4; the highest, +4.)

RESULTS OF PART I OF QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS:

1. Are you glad now that you were in a non-graded section of English 132?

   41 Students said "Yes"
   46 Students Said "No"
    6 Said they weren't sure
    3 Gave other answers

5. If you could choose, would you prefer that your next English course be graded or non-graded?

   37 Students said non-graded
   51 Said graded
    3 Were unsure
    5 Gave no answer

7. Would you recommend that English 132 be continued on this basis?

   * 44 said Yes
   * 38 said No
     3 have other answers
     3 gave no answer

(*These responses are somewhat inconsistent with question #1. It could be that some misunderstood what basis I was referring to, although in the preceding question I definitely said the non-graded basis.)

RESPONSES TO QUESTION #3:

The following are the disadvantages of the non-graded system most often given by the students who answered "NO" to Question #1:

1. Fourteen students said the non-graded system provided "less incentive," although they worded it variously,(such as: "No use in trying any harder than just enough to get by;"I didn't know what to work for, if at all. I naturally procrastinate alot - course did not 'push' me;" "lack of initiative to do my work on time and to the best of my ability")

   Another that might fall in this group:
   "Discouraged those who want to learn and get reward for work they have done."

2. Six students said that the course was too much work for "just" Credit.

3. Five said its main disadvantage was that it didn't help g.p.a.

4. Four said it didn't show them where they "stood." ("One doesn't know how well he is doing...")

5. Four felt that main disadvantage was that there was no extra reward for the student who works harder.

Of those who answered Yes:

1. Five also gave "less incentive" as the main disadvantage.

2. While two agreed that not helping the g.p.a. was the main disadvantage.

Another gave an interesting disadvantage:

> "Since this is a new thing and because of the way people have been conditioned to receive education, some people didn't try hard enough. But this can be overcome in time."

RESPONSES TO QUESTION #2:

The following are the advantages of the non-graded system most often given by the students who answered "Yes" to Question #1:

1. Eleven students said that having less pressure was the main advantage, although they worded this variously.

2. Six others gave responses similar to "less pressure," (such as: "Worrying about work not grades;" "I worked just as hard as my other class and I didn't have to worry about grades;" "I think there was a more relaxed mood in class, I learned more I think than if I had been given a grade")

3. Various different responses were given, including:

   a. "The first step toward achieving the true and complete value of education"

   b. "I was more willing to work - knowing it wouldn't matter if my gold star might not shine as bright as others.

RESPONSES TO QUESTION #4
Of those who answered "NO".

1. Six mentioned that there is more incentive in a graded system. ("I miss not having the challenge of trying for an A," "People try harder when they know what they are trying for")

2. Four didn't like the fact that all got the same reward. ("Some people work harder and I think they deserve a better grade instead of the same as everybody else.")

3. There were various other responses including:

   a. "I benefitted just as much from the class but a grade would help my g.p.a. more"

b. "I feel that if we were schooled not to rely on grades but to learn for the sake of learning it would be good. But presently all other schools do not feel the same."

c. "Too many people place an emphasis on grades rather than knowledge. Non-graded system would be excellent if all courses in all colleges were set up that way."

RESPONSES TO QUESTION #4:

The following are some observations by those who answered "yes" to Question #1:

1. "Glad in it - yes, but only to the extent that I believe it is a thing that's coming into being - I believe it ought to be instituted in first grade. I believe it helps those who have a feeling they are underachievers and this feeling may be a result of receiving poor grades ever since the first grade. [Would you recommend it?] not unless other colleges start doing it. A lot of industries still want "top" people. How will they know how well you did?"

2. I enjoyed our discussion sessions very much. I really felt like learning and talking about the short stories because I knew I wouldn't be graded on what I knew or remembered.

3. It gave me a second outlook in the acquisition of a grade.

4. I have always attended schools where grades were stressed as a great importance - it is a good system at COM.

5. I found that my need to achieve still remained the same even though I was not rewarded with an A for my efforts.

6. This grading system encourages the student to use his imagination and let his mind develop freely rather than having to learn set material that he may never use.

7. "I feel that this is the only way to achieve the true meaning of education. Where people want to learn for there own benefit not for grades or rewards."

   This student agreed that she studied "primarily in order to earn a grade" (question 8b) but added "This is because I have been conditioned to feel this way all through my school years. I feel that this is a very bad thing and this is why I feel so strongly toward a non-graded system. It would be most effective if it were started from the 1st grade."

8. "It (non-graded system) is new, and new things are not accepted right away - and this type of system should be started in primary grades - it is a big adjustment to be orientated to work for a grade, and then make a sudden change - it takes a while to find out it is better to be evaluated as an individual, then to make a grade that is set up with no way to give credit to the effort of the individual (which varies)

   "There was a definite difference in class participation, interaction, interest level. My personal experience has been positive also, I have had an increase in interest. I was encouraged to interact and participate in activities.

I did not feel the pressure I felt last semester about grade, or even feel in my other courses (graded) presently. I was not looking forward to 132-- But I found it interesting and enjoyable."

Can all this be due to the non-graded system - or my instructor and the chance that we just "happened" to have a good group -????

I sincerely feel it can not all be coincidence - it must be because of the system. But my views are not the same as one just out of high school and 12 years of the graded system, so that may be where the discrepancy lies.

(Other observations by these students were: "Different grades are not necessarily needed to learn"; "Some students slow about turning in assignments"; "Some of the students took advantage of it and some still didn't try any harder"; "There is a lot more pressure when you are striving for a higher grade"; "We always had co-operation in class and a lot of pro-con discussion"; "Grades produce pressures which pulls some people down"; "Eventually all classes will end this way"; "Students more at ease, yet still reponsive"; "Thought new grading system was very fair".)

Two students who were unsure of question #1 gave these responses:

1. "It is nice to be given some sort of recognition for outstanding effort, or why try?"

2. "I found some students used it as an excuse for 'no incentive' to do well."

APPENDIX #1

Five of these six questions which I disallowed got "favorable" responses. I disallowed #12 because I had not referred to the non-graded system in the wording. I disallowed #20, #25, #27, and #28 because I felt the wording was poor and that including these results - (which were overwhelmingly favorable)- would give an inaccurate picture. I disallowed #22 because the numbers 1-5 were inadvertantly deleted on the questionnaire form and 28 of 96 students did not indicate their response.

POST-SEMESTER QUESTIONNAIRE ON GRADING SYSTEM

NUMBER_____

Please answer all of the following questions. It is important that you answer e each question honestly. Your answers will in no way affect your standing in English 132.

PART I

1. Are you glad now that you were in a non-graded section of English 132?

2. What did you find to be the main advantages of the non-graded system?

3. What do you think were the main disadvantages?

4. What observations did you make concerning grading systems due to this experiment?

5. If you could choose, would you prefer that your next English course be graded or non-graded?

6. Are there any courses you would like to take on the non-graded basis? (If so, list or indicate which ones.)

7. Would you recommend that English 132 be continued on this basis?

8. Indicate which of the following statements you feel are true---by circling the letter in front of those you agree with:

   a. Grades are necessary to show which students learned the most.

   b. I study primarily in order to earn a grade.

c. I have often wished that someone would do away with grades.

d. I study because I enjoy learning.

e. A's are a good way of rewarding excellence.

f. Students learn a lot more if they are working for a grade.

g. I would read my assignments even if I knew I wouldn't be tested over them.

h. Working for grades discourages co-operation among students.

i. Most students will not study if they know they aren't being grades.

j. Grades are very important.

k. I need a grade to show me how much I have learned.

PART II

For each of the following statements, circle the number which corresponds to your reaction to it.

(Code: 1 Strongly agree

2 Agree somewhat

3 Not sure

4 Disagree somewhat

5 Strongly disagree)

1. The non-graded system encouraged me to do as little as possible.	1	2	3	4	5
2. It made me think that the instructor was more interested in me.	1	2	3	4	5
3. It encouraged the class to work together as a whole.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I feel that I became more interested in the subject matter as a result of not receiving grades.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The non-graded system made me more willing to co-operate with the instructor.	1	2	3	4	5
6. It encouraged me to explore on my own new ways of self-expression.	1	2	3	4	5

7.	It discouraged people from participating in class discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	It freed me from unnecessary tension and allowed me to work better.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	It encouraged me to think of the instructor as a helper rather than as a distributor of grades.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	It caused me to be more eager to help other students.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I would have taken more effort with my projects if I knew I would receive a grade.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I felt as though my ideas and suggestions were welcomed in this course.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	The non-graded system encouraged me to talk to the instructor more.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	It helped the class work together as a whole.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	It increased my desire to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	It decreased the instructor's effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Because of the non-graded system I am more willing now to explore things on my own.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I would have turned in better papers if I had received a grade on them.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I appreciated not being required to do more than another student in order to earn a higher grade.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	The instructors are primarily trying to save themselves time by not giving grades.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The non-graded system encouraged students generally to help one another.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I found myself willing to do more than what was <u>required</u> of me.					
23.	I felt a lot of unnecessary pressure in this course due to the non-graded system.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	It improved the class discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	I prefer to avoid the instructor as much as possible.	1	2	3	4	5

26. The non-graded system did not give me enough incentive to do my best.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I think writing stories or poems is a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5
28. We should be told exactly which project to do and how to do it.	1	2	3	4	5